New Stories of
THE MYSTERIOUS WAYS OF

# WANG FOO

By SIDNEY C. PARTRIDGE

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## III.---The Abbot's Beads

"WELL, and what's the matter with this poor old chap?" asked Dr. Cortelyou, the U. S. consul at Shanghai, of Dr. Evanstone, the surgeon of the American Mission Hospital as they stopped in front of a cot in Ward No. 3 where a Chinese patient was groaning and struggling with his uncomfortable bandages. "He seems to be pretty badly damaged—accident, I suppose; was it on board ship or in one of the factories ashore?"

"Neither, sir," replied the surgeon, "he was done up in a street fight not a block away from the Consulate. The police rescued him just in time; if those brutes had had a few more whacks at him, he would have gone to the cemetery district, without having to stop at the hospital on the way."

"What was he, a thief? I know they beat them unmercifully sometimes when they catch them in the act. All Asiatics are a little inclined to favor lynch law, you know, and the English Consul told me last night that in their own system they believe in punishing crime on the spot where it was committed. So they will chain up a burglar to the door-post of the house which he attempted to rob and even hang up the head of a decapitated murderer over the entrance to his victim's home—a rather gruesome method of making the punishment effective, eh?"

"No, this patient wasn't a thief or a criminal of any kind, from our point of view. He wasn't even intoxicated. You will be very much surprised to know that the only offense of which he was guilty—and it is a most heinous one in Chinese eyes—was of offering to his grandfather a cup of lukewarm tea!"

"What! You don't mean to tell me that for this trifle they fell on the poor fellow and put him into this condition; I can hardly believe it."

"It seems almost incredible, doesn't it? But it is an actual fact. His father pitched into him first, screaming, 'You've disgraced me, you unfilial wretch!' Then his uncle and his two brothers-in-law joined in and threw him out into the street. A gang of wharf-coolies passing by arrived just in time to vindicate the native code of honor by giving him a few extra blows with their bamboos, and then a foreigner driving by in his trap summoned the police and they brought him here."

"But please explain to me a little more. Wherein does the awful offense consist? Now I confess I don't like lukewarm tea or coffee myself, but I don't as a rule knock the waiter down and beat him half to death if the beverage isn't my exact temperature, do I?"

"Hardly, but you see we're living in another world here and our points of view are so radically different that what may be a very innocent thing in the West becomes a very serious thing in the East and vice versa."

Just at this point the surgeon's house-boy appeared with the chit-book and a visitor's card and interrupted the conversation: "Mas-si-ter, have got one piecee Chinee man your house side wantchee speakee you."

"All right, ask the gentleman to take a seat in the parlor and tell him I will be over in a minute"; then, turning to the Consul and showing him the card, he added: "Here's just the man to tell you all about it. Our friend Mr. Wang Foo from Hong Kong is here in the settlement for a few days on business and I asked him to drop in for a cup of tea. You remember him, don't you? He's that wonderful man that solves all the Chinese mysteries for the police when they get beyond their depth."

"Why, certainly, he's the identical one that exposed that bogus miracle at the White Stag Temple last winter when the naval officers were there?"

"Come over and join us at the house and we'll put this question of the hot and cold tea up to him, while we're sipping a little of it ourselves."

Mrs. Evanstone received the little party at the surgeon's residence and after the usual greetings and compliments of the day, she took her place at the handsome samovar which some of the doctor's Russian patients had presented him, and presided as the most graceful of hostesses over the tea-table.

"Let me see," she said, turning to the native guest, "do you take yours with milk and sugar or with lemon? Or possibly your prefer it quite plain in real Chinese style?"

"No," replied Wang Foo with the most elegant of bows, "in all these matters I pride myself on being strictly cosmopolitan. According to your own proverb, when I'm in Rome, I do as the Romans do, so when I am in an American lady's home, I take my tea as the Americans do, i. e., with milk and sugar and not even with a Russian lemon."

"Most complimentary and diplomatic! Now"—holding up the sugar-tongs in the air, "shall it be one lump or two?"

"Well, modesty would dictate 'one', but a strict regard for truth impels me to say 'two'."

"Two it shall be, then, and one little extra one on the saucer in case you find it isn't quite sweet enough for your taste."

"By the way, Mr. Wang," began the surgeon, "we have an interesting case in the hospital just now which the Consul and I think you can throw a little light upon. It is nothing less than a patient who was actually beaten into a condition of insensibility by his family and his neighbors because he is said to have offered his grandfather a cup of lukewarm tea instead of one that was boiling hot. At least, that is the testimony that is given to me by the police and by the hospital staff. Now I know how particular the Chinese are about all their table etiquette and I appreciate their preference for the scalding hot beverage, but this is the first time I have ever known it to go so far as to cause actual physical injury. Don't you suppose that there is something else behind it all? Don't you suppose they have some other reason for attacking and beating this man and that the story of the offering of the lukewarm tea to the grandfather is only a blind? You are a person of very wide experience in these matters. Now just give us your judgment in the case. As a matter of fact, have you ever personally known anything as bad as this to happen?"

"Oh, yes, the cases occur all the time, but they do not, as a rule, end quite so seriously. The Chinese are great admires of—and practisers of—the doctrine of 'Blessed are the Peacemakers' and they usually separate the contestants in a quarrel before they come to actual blows."

"But just what constitutes the seriousness of the offense in the matter of the hot and cold tea, Mr. Wang?" asked Dr. Cortelyou. "I know how careful the Chinese are about civilities and courtesies, but why should a mere breach of etiquette or a matter of carelessness in so small a thing as a table beverage be regarded almost as a crime?"

"If Mrs. Evanstone will permit us to light our cheroots," addressing his hostess, who waved her fan in assent, "I think I can make that clear to you."

"Oh, I don't mind the odor of tobacco at all—in fact, I rather enjoy it," she replied. "Please go right on and if there is no objection, I should like to stay and listen, too, for I've become quite interested in the case of this poor man myself."

"Well," began the Man of Mystery, "my people are Asiatics and you know that all over this great continent the laws of hospitality are much stricter in every way than they are in the Western world and to violate or disregard them constitutes a most serious offense. You have heard of the Arab and his tent and how his deadliest enemy is perfectly secure if once he can get inside and break bread and salt—well, very much the same idea pervades all the Far-Eastern world. 'If the Rites and Ceremonies are observed'—as the Chinese quote—'then all is harmonious; if they are disregarded, then all is discord.' Eternal friendship or eternal hatred may hang upon the condition of the food and drink of which the host and the guest partake. The universal token of hospitality in China is the bowl of fresh made tea. It is everywhere placed before the guest, be he prince or beggar and be the place a palac or a hovel. To omit it, or to serve it in any other condition than boiling hot, is more than a breach of politeness; it is an insult which gives the deepest offense. What is a serious matter between friend and friend becomes infinitely more so when it is a case of an inferior to a superior, as of a pupil to a teacher, but it reaches the extreme in the case of a child to a grandparent. From what I have learned of this man in the hospital, they would probably say of him, 'Kwai tien shang, kwai ti hia, kwai yin kwei,' i. e., 'He has insulted Heaven above and earth below and the spirits in the realm of shades'.

"Good gracious! What an arraignment!" exclaimed the Consul. "Why, how could he possibly have been guilty of all this? How, by any human possibility could a cup of cold tea be an insult to heaven and earth and everything under the earth?"

"It is just this way," continued the Chinese scholar: "Tea is one of the best gifts of heaven to man. There is just one proper way of preparing and serving it and every Chinese child is trained in it from infancy. To offer to any visitor a bowl of heaven's gift prepared in any but heaven's own way, is simply a reflection on the gods above. Then, again, to violate the laws of hospitality by offering cool tea to a guest is to cast serious reflection upon the gods of the porches and the doorways, under whose protection he has crossed the threshold—so, you see, the gods below are affected as well as those above."

"But the Spirits in the realm of the shades, how about them?"

"That is the culmination of it all. That is the crowning insult to his ancestors and to Confucius and the Blessed Sages who taught us the doctrine of filial piety, for the guest in question was the man's own grandfather—his oldest living ancestor and the very last person on this earth to whom he should have dared to offer a bowl of lukewarm tea. Now, taking all these things together, I think you can readily understand how the combination was enough to excite the family and friends to cast the offender out of doors, and the cries of 'Foo Hiao! Foo Hiao!' 'Unfilial! Unfilial!' will always turn the passers-by against the victim and they will be glad and ready to add their little quota to his punishment without inquiring into the merits of the case."

"And what chance is there of getting the family punished for half-killing this poor wretch?"

"Very little, I fear, from a Chinese standpoint, for, however strong the foreign Assessor in the Mixed Court might be for a penalty, the native Magistrate would regard it as a case of culpable carelessness or of brutal disrespect to an ancestor—and in either case he deserved what he got."

"Well, Mr. Wang, said the Consul, as he rose and extended his hand, we are certainly indebted to you again, as we so often are, for helping us to get at the real reason that underlies so many of these doings. I can think of only one case that I ever personally witnessed that reminds me of this, and that was on the stage in a theatre in London. A poor sailor was eating his dinner in a restaurant and when he started to go out there was an altercation with the proprietor about the payment of the check, and from words they came to blows, and then the waiters and the whole establishment fell on him and beat him black and blue and threw him out onto the sidewalk, and when a kind passer-by picked him up and inquired as to the cause, the poor man answered in broken words, 'I-I-a-a was-a-three-farthings-short!'"




When Wang Foo bade the surgeon good-bye, he started away in his jin-rik-sha toward the English Consular Gardens and in less than a quarter of an hour he alighted there and paying off the coolie, crossed the park by one of the paths open to the public and, emerging into the native alley at the other end, soon found his way to the home of the basket-maker from Hong Kong, which home supplied for him the place of a native hotel.

After the evening rice and the pipe of peace he started out again—apparently for an innocent stroll by the river's bank—and ere long reached the high brick wall which bounded the Consular Gardens. Here he paused a moment and, looking in both directions to be sure he was not being observed, he quickly removed his jacket of yellow and his gown of blue and turning them inside-out, changed their whole color and appearance and re-dressed himself in brown and purple. The blue knob on his hat was drawn out on its wire and a red one quickly slipped into its place, a long mustache and goatee fastened to his upper lip and chin and he re-entered the park as a visitor from one of the up-river cities. Even the surgeon's house-boy, who took such an interest in his afternoon visit, would have been utterly unable to recognize him in the evening. (It was this self-same house-boy, by the way, that told Wang Foo all about the patient in the hospital, at whose bedside the Consul and the surgeon were talking, and thus enabled him to form a judgment in the case before his host even introduced the subject.) He sauntered along, over the Hong Kew Bridge and down by the old American Consulate, till he came to the gate of the Mission Hospital and, passing it, took a proffered seat in the gate-keeper's lodge. After the pipe and tea he inquired, quite casually, "The foreign doctor will not return this evening?"

"No, Venerable Sir," replied the keeper.

"And who is in charge here during the night?"

"Dr. Chang, his assistant, is in charge, sir."

"Please say to him that a visitor from another city would like the honor of meeting him" (slipping a good-sized coin into his palm).

"Alas, sir, Dr. Chang and the head nurse are both away at the bathing-hall, but the second nurse will escort you, if you wish to go into the hospital, sir."

"Thank you, I want very much to see if an old friend of mine is a patient here."

Duly escorted by Hoo Sing the second nurse, Wang Foo entered the male Ward No. 3, and passed along from bed to bed, until he came to the place where the unfortunate victim of the "luke-warm" tea" was asleep under his quilt. He paused and asked Hoo Sing about him, quite astonishing the nurse with his familiarity with the case and utterly disarming any suspicion he might have about a visit to the ward at this late hour of the night. "Poor chap," he said, "it certainly went hard with him for his unfilial spirit."

"It certainly did, sir."

"But my heart goes out to him now for he certainly has suffered. I wonder if you couldn't just run down to the fruit seller's by the Hong Kew Bridge and buy him a dozen oranges and hide them away under his bedding for him? See, here is the money and a wine-tip for yourself."

"I ought not to leave the hospital alone, sir, when the doctor is away, but it won't be for very long, so I think I can risk it."

"Here, this window is very near the ground; I'll help you out and you can slip quietly down there without anyone being the wiser."

Suiting the action to the word the nurse climbed out the window and crept away in the direction of the Bridge, leaving Wang Foo alone in the ward. The moment he realized the situation he rose and looking very carefully about him stepped softly over to the last bed in the corner and leaning forward eagerly scrutinized the face of the patient. He was asleep. His face and skin were as yellow as the golden letters on the scroll above his bed. He was breathing slowly and painfully. On the wooden tablet his name was written, "Ting Tai Foo" and after it the significant words, "Poison—Unknown." The detective unfastened the upper buttons of his sleeping jacket and uncovering his chest revealed—stretching across from shoulder to shoulder—a string of seven round scars.

"The Abbot's Beads; The Abbot's Beads!" he exclaimed, "I have found them at last."

He started and looked hastily around, but no one had heard him and not a patient seemed to be stirring. He retraced his footsteps and, bidding the gate-keeper good-night turned sharply around into the adjoining street. Summoning the first two jin-rik-shas he bargained with them for a very special duty, which was no less than to assist him in returning a patient to his home from the foreigner's hospital—a duty they are always glad to undertake. He hurried with them to the window through which the nurse had gone for the oranges; it was but the work of a moment for him to push the two coolies through it and to point them to the bed where the poison victim lay soundly sleeping. In an instant more they had wrapped him up in his colored quilt, passed him out through the window and were dragging his jin-rik-sha through the back streets of the Settlement in the direction of the Chinese City gates.

When Dr. Evanstone made his rounds through the hospital on the following morning, he came to bed No. 11 in the corner of Ward No. 3 and noticed that the patient was missing! Dr. Chang and the two nurses all disclaimed any knowledge of the escape and the gate-keeper swore that no patient had passed through the door—there was only one conclusion, namely: he had vanished through the window!

"But he was too weak to walk," said the surgeon to his assistant, "to say nothing of attempting to climb out of a window."

"Yes," was the reply of the Chinese deputy, with the blandest of smiles, "but you see it is getting near the Chinese New Year season now and all the patients' friends want them back home—and, if they can't come themselves, why their friends and relations just come and bring them, that's is all. Every hospital in China has the same experience. Shall we enter him as 'Discharged and cured?'"

"No, sir," replied the American, rather irritated at the question, "we will enter him simply as 'Vanished'. I will enter myself as 'Cured', and if this thing occurs again when you are on duty, you will enter yourself as 'Discharged'."

That afternoon Dr. Evanstone met Mr. Wang Foo strolling through the English Garden. The latter greeted him with:

"Well, Doctor, how is our poor unfilial friend today?"

"Oh, he is getting on nicely, but the chap in the next bed to him—a mysterious poison case that I was most anxious to treat and watch—jumped out the window last night and took French leave. The nurses tell me he went home for New Year's. Isn't it a little early in the season for that sort of thing, Mr. Wang?"

"Well, yes, unless he came from a distance and they all like to get home early, you know. What was the case? Opium, as usual, I suppose."

"No, not at all, some drug or other that he had taken that turned him yellow as gold. We couldn't get a word out of him, so I had to make all my diagnosis by dead reckoning, as the sailors say."

"Too bad that you couldn't go on with the case, wasn't it? Well, perhaps he will turn up again. They sometimes come back after New Year's, if they think the hospital has been good to them. Would you know him again if he did?"

"Yes, I could spot him out of a thousand."

"How so? The foreigners usually say that their native patients all look so much alike that they can hardly tell one from the other."

"Well, this chap had a string of scars across his chest. They looked as if they had been made with old copper cash by some native doctor. They were so regular that I nick-named him at once 'Old Necklace' and I know I could pick him out anywhere."

"You don't remember who brought him to the hospital, do you?"

"No, it's impossible for me to remember these things without referring to the Record Book—but, now that you speak of it, I believe he was picked up in the street very early in the morning, quite unconscious and with a piece of paper pinned on to his gown which said, 'Please take me to the foreign hospital.'"

"Well, his coming, then, was about as mysterious as his going, wasn't it?" remarked Wang Foo with a smile, as he bade the surgeon good-night and continued his walk through the park.

* * * * *

The lamp was burning low in the inner chamber of the Tao Tai's Yamen in old Shanghai, where two officials were leaning over a table and carefully scrutinizing a number of papers unrolled before them.

"Your Excellency," remarked the Secretary, "these letters show that so far nothing has been found in the up-river cities, although most careful search has everywhere been made. Here are reports also from Hang Chow and Soo Chow and they are all to the same effect. I still believe that he will be found hiding somewhere in Shanghai, for, as you know, they think they are safer here than anywhere else in the country. They are lost in the mixed multitude here and can easily escape detection."

"How long has Wang Foo been at work here now?"

"He arrived on the third day of the moon, this is the seventeenth, exactly two weeks tonight."

"Well, what is his latest idea? Has he any definite clue?"

"Nothing that he has given out, so far, but, as your Excellency knows, he is a man of few words and very reticent and doesn't as a rule commit himself until he is very sure of his whole position."

"Have the European police made a thorough search through all the pawnshops and rookeries in the Settlement for the stolen beads?"

"Yes, but the difficulty is that no one is able to give them an accurate description, for no one has ever seen them."

"True, that adds to the mystery. We must wait a few days more and see if anything further develops."

The above conversation between the Tao Tai and his Secretary had reference to the head of one of the most dangerous bands of counterfeiters the Chinese Government had had to deal with. After many months of unrelenting labor, most of the members had been apprehended and some of them summarily punished, but the ring-leader was still at large and the Provincial authorities were holding the Tao Tai responsible for his whereabouts. The latter, after exhausting all other means, had sent to Hong Kong for Wang Foo and the great detective had now been some two weeks at work upon the case. All that he had to go upon was a very meagre description of the man, which had been wormed out of his confederates by torture and a placard which was found tacked to the door of the Tao Tai's apartment in the Yamen. The placard bore these words:

"Wei Jin Yoong Yao Chien Chao,
Choo Tze Choo Ting Yeu Pao."

Which might be freely rendered as follows:

"He who makes coin for human needs,
Will surely wear the Abbot's beads."

As all criminals are generally fond of jewelry, His Excellency concluded at once that the head counterfeiter was wearing a valuable rosary, probably purloined from some neighboring temple and, in due course of time, would seek to dispose of it at some pawnbroker's in the city. A very thorough search was accordingly made by both the English and the Chinese police, of the temples and of the pawnshops, but, although several necklaces were unearthed, nothing was recovered that could with any propriety be called "The Abbot's Beads." No temple treasury had been robbed—what other kind of beads could possibly be referred to?

It was while passing a sailor's tattoo shop near the Japanese wharf that an inspiration came to Wang Foo, which opened an entirely new line of search. His eye was attracted by the sign and its peculiar wording:

"Why pay out your money for jewels
of silver and gold,
When I can adorn you with those
that never grow old?"

This was surrounded by cheap pictures and prints of rings, watches, pins, necklaces and glittering jewels tattooed on the human frame. Why might not the "Abbot's Beads" be painted or tattooed or even cut and burned into the neck of the man he was seeking? He thought it all out that night, and the very next day began his search for the "Beads". How and where he eventually found them, has been already told above.

* * * * *

"But what made you think of looking for him in the Mission Hospital, Mr. Wang?" inquired Inspector Gubbins a few days after the capture, as they were having a friendly chat and smoke over it at Headquarters. That's about the last place to expect to find a Chinese criminal, isn't it?

"Yes and no. If they or their friends have ever been treated by a foreign surgeon, they are almost certain to go back to him in time of trouble, for they know it's their only chance of life. You see he had evidently two companions, and, as is often the case, when the time of danger came, one stood by him and the other turned against him. The friend was the one who pinned the paper on his gown saying, "Please take me to the foreign hospital," the enemy was the one who attempted to poison him and who put the placard on the Tao Tai's door."

"But why should they make their notice so formal and ambiguous? Why go to all the trouble of putting it into poetry?"

"Ah, my dear Mr. Gubbins, that's just the difference between East and West. 'Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well,' we say, and there is no reason why a notice of a thief to his friends shouldn't be in good poetry—that is, provided he can write the poetry, is there?"

"Why, I suppose not. I've even heard that in some Asiatic countries, when a man intends to commit suicide, he spends hours, and even days, in composing his farewell to the world. I suppose that means that he wants lots of pity and sympathy and all that sort of thing after it's too late to give it to him, eh?"

"No, not at all, it simply means that the law of courtesy and grace holds right through unto the end. There's no reason why one shouldn't go out of this world in as refined and as becoming a way as possible, is there?"

How beautiful and dignified were the old suicides of the East! Contrast the silken cord of China, or the hara-kiri sword of Japan with the horrible and repulsively vulgar blowing out of one's brains with an American gun. Would any person with an artistic taste hesitate between them?

It reminds me of the classic:

"What is perfect propriety? asked the disciples of Confucius.

"To withdraw as gracefully as one enters," replied the Master.

## Mr. Bowser Refuses to Accept Great Wealth

By M QUAD

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WHEN Mr. Bowser came up to dinner the other night there was no Mrs. Bowser to greet him. He soon learned that she had gone shopping and might not come home for half an hour yet. Mr. Bowser walked around, in an unsatisfied way, until she appeared, and he was about to call her to account, when her attitude made him wonder. He had not seen her look so bright and animated for a year, and her step was almost that of a girl. He was about to ask for an explanation, but his dignity forbade it.

"I have some great news to tell you after dinner. I have been talking business all the last half hour, and I think you can safely count on becoming a millionaire at the end of a year."

Through the dinner hour Mrs. Bowser continued bright and chatty. Surely something good must have happened, but she would not tell of it. Mr. Bowser continued to be gruff and unforgiving, but it was a relief to him when they finished dinner and reached the sitting-room. He was all ready to hear the news, and Mrs. Bowser was ready to tell it. She said:

"Mr. Bowser, on two occasions you wanted to buy a chicken farm. You came home to tell me you could make ten thousand a year. I figured with you, and found you would lose about five thousand a year, instead of making anything at all. I have now changed my mind about it."

"If you can see it, no one else can! There isn't one darned cent in the chicken business! Since we have had our talk about it I have talked with a dozen chicken men, and there hasn't been one of them that has been making any money."

"But, you see, they are not handling the business right," explained Mrs. Bowser. "Now, then, listen to me. We are going to sell this house and buy a chicken farm."

"We are not going to do any such blamed thing!" almost shouted Mr. Bowser.

"You wait till I get through. This house and lot are worth ten thousand dollars, but we will sell it for six thousand, if we can't do better. I have found a chicken farm of one hundred acres. We can buy it for six thousand. There is a pretty good house on it, and one hundred chickens to start with. I have been talking with the man who owns it. He has consumption and wants to sell out. I told him you would be around to see him in the morning."

"But I will not do so!" exclaimed Mr. Bowser. "Woman, what in thunder ails you? You go ahead and prove to me that we can't make a blamed cent in the chicken business, and then you turn right around and figure out that we can make thousands of dollars. What do you mean, anyhow?

"You talk like a crazy woman!"

"When I've finished you won't say so. We sell this house and move out there. We buy ten thousand more chickens. I can buy them for about fifty cents apiece. That is about five thousand dollars—a mere nothing to us. We shall buy thirty incubators. We shall want the kind that sell for $150. The cost is a mere nothing to us. Every day we shall gather from those ten thousand chickens at least ten thousand eggs. From those incubators we shall hatch about three thousand chickens a day. There is a constant and great demand for broilers. We can meet that demand. Our income from broilers alone will be at least one thousand five hundred dollars per day. I estimate our eggs will bring us in $2,000 a day. Now, then——"

"Stop! Stop!" roared Mr. Bowser, as he rose up. "Why woman, you are talking like a lunatic!"

"Don't interrupt me, Mr. Bowser," she softly said. "I figure that we will need two cooks and an assistant, because we will have to board our help. There will be at least eight men, and you and I must turn in and work. You will need an automobile to go to town and see the market men. I will need a runabout to go to the bank with our money. Each of us must have a chauffeur and that will make two more in the house. The first thing off you will have to buy miles and miles of chicken wire, and then——"

"I won't buy one darned foot of chicken wire!" shouted Mr. Bowser as he brought his fist down.

"Then you must build a freight or packing house for our own convenience. It is five miles to a railroad station. Instead of trying to haul our eggs and chickens to the depot, I think you had better build a railroad. It will be about five miles long and cost $75,000, but that will be a mere flea bite to us. You see, the chicken raisers have not——"

"By the Lord Harry, woman——"

"Sh-s-s—Mr. Bowser, let me go on. It has been suggested to me that we go into bee-keeping in connection with the chickens. I will tell you why we should do so. When a hen won't lay an egg every day there is something wrong with her emotions. She is in a morbid state, and she wants arousing. We have the bees to arouse her. It is a fact that every time a bee stings a hen she cackles in her joy and runs away and lays an egg valued at five cents. Five hives of bees will keep the hens aroused and they will make us about $5,000 every year."

"By George—by George!" whispered Mr. Bowser.

"And they have found out," continued Mrs. Bowser, "that the stinging of bees will cure rheumatism. Why not advertise that you will take one hundred rheumatic patients a week and charge them $10 each? Keep your chickens busy. Keep your bees busy. Keep your hired help busy. Keep your railroad busy. Keep your bank account busy. Why, Mr. Bowser, if you will let me, I will make a million dollars for you."

"No, you won't! You would make a pauper of me in ten days!"

"We shall need about five thousand bushels of oyster shells for our chickens to nibble on, and I wish you would see to it the first thing in the morning. You can do this while I am selling our place."

"Shut right up about the chicken business!" hoarsely commanded Mr. Bowser. "I don't want to hear another word about it. You are as crazy as a bed bug. You get some sense into your head, or I'll be hanged if I don't divorce you!"

And Mr Bowser left the house to take a walk and, when he had gone, Mrs. Bowser fell into such a fit of laughter that the cook came running up from the kitchen and wanted to know if she shouldn't telephone for the doctor.

TEETH
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